

The ACES Older Worker Program

CHCO Academy

Workforce Challenges


- Succession planning
- Maintaining a skilled, knowledgeable, and dedicated workforce
- Flexibility in managing the ebb and flow of program demands
- Budget constraints/priorities
- The projected “brain-drain” due to retirements

USDA 2012 Workforce Needs


■ Retirement eligible USDA employees -	17,779
■ Some of the specialties needed -	
➤ Forestry specialist	1,014
➤ Soil conservation specialists	1,142
➤ Food inspection	1,209
➤ Information technology	1,243
➤ Consumer safety inspection	1,260
➤ Loan specialist	1,375
➤ Forestry technician	1,455
➤ Biological specialist, including vet science	1,850

Based on the Partnership for Public Service's "*Where the Jobs Are*" report





How to access the specific skills, knowledge, and dedication
that the Department and its agencies need?



About NOWCC

- Provided over 12 million work hours to EPA and USDA
- A 501c3 non-profit
- Founded in 1997 as a “friendly spin-off” from AARP
- Approved indirect rate of 12.15 percent of direct expenses
- Designated a “low-risk” auditee
- Staffed with highly experienced professionals with decades of experience in older worker issues and programs
- Offices in Arlington VA, Dallas TX, and Denver CO
- Doing business in 36 States with \$24M annual revenues

Agency Benefits of an Older Worker Employment Program

- Flexibility for the agency
- Very low administrative workload
- Very competitive costs (12.15% on direct)
- Efficient program startup and enrollee on-boarding
- Enables selection of the specific talent that is needed, when it is needed, where is it needed
- Provides the opportunity for mentoring, and knowledge transfer as part of succession planning
 - Example contract specialist

Getting an Enrollee on Board

1. Agency defines needs for a program
2. Agency determines funding source(s), contracting vehicle
 - a) **Cooperative agreement**
 - b) **Contract IDIQ**
3. NOWCC recruits and screens applicants
4. Agency field offices work with NOWCC Field Coordinators to identify candidates
5. **Agency interviews and selects the person**
6. NOWCC enrolls the person in the program
7. **Agency directs day-to-day work**
8. NOWCC provides salary and benefits and handles personnel actions
9. NOWCC provides ongoing program financial and management information
10. Agency determines the length of the engagement

NOWCC Support Role

1. Orient agency Monitors and Coordinators
2. Recruits applicants
3. Works with Coordinators/Monitors to identify candidates
4. Screens applicants
5. Arranges interviews with agency staff
6. Conducts reference checks
7. Can coordinate additional background checks
8. Enrolls the selected person in the program
9. Provide orientation for Enrollee
10. Administers salary and benefits and handles personnel actions
11. Provides ongoing program financial and management information

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The ACES Older Worker Employment Program

National Older Worker Career Center

ACES – A unique business model

- Agency interviews and selects the person
- Agency directs day-to-day work
- Managed through a cooperative agreement
- Enrollees' allegiance is with the agency
- Low cost non-profit operations
- Liability can be provided by the agency- 2008 Farm Bill
- Transparency of non-profit records and finances
- Advances or reimbursements on program expenses
- “Pay-as-you-go” financing
- Flexibility for the agency and the older worker

Levels and Wage Bands

Level Wages

Level	Low	Maximum
<i>1</i>	<i>11.33</i>	<i>19.58</i>
<i>2</i>	<i>14.16</i>	<i>27.71</i>
<i>3</i>	<i>20.53</i>	<i>38.48</i>
<i>4</i>	<i>30.80</i>	<i>50.00</i>

NOWCC's ACES Program Today

- 150 Enrollees (*65% former USDA*)
- FY10 Budget: \$4.2 million
- Enrollees worked between 16 and 40 hours per week
- Hourly Wages: \$11.33 - \$38.48
- FTE during the FY10: 93
- Length of engagements: 6 weeks to 12 months
(can be renewed)

The Legislative Authority

- The EPA SEE (Senior Environmental Employment) Program – P.L. 98-313
- The USDA ACES (Agriculture Conservation Experienced Services) Program – P.L. 110-234

Advantage of Legislation

1. Frees the grant, agreement and contract process of competition.
2. Provides liability coverage as federal employee (drive vehicles, designing engineering, conservation practices on private land).

Issues and Opportunities

Issues

- ACES funding limitations-certain conservation programs
- USFS authorization

Opportunities

- USFS pilot program or a non-ACES authority
- Changes to the program in the next Farm Bill or other legislation